565 into 64 gramams (caste areas), within each of
631 which a Nambudiri assembly composed of the
623 oldest members of the patrilineal extended families of the area met periodically to arrange public ceremonies and tried cases of offence against caste laws. Within each gramam, the Nambu-
[564] diris were divided into ranked subcastes according to their wealth and ritual functions; these,
565 however, need not concern us here. Over the
631 whole area, a dignitary known as the Aravan-
693 cheri Tamburakkal, [12] who resided in Travancore, was universally acknowledged as the ritual and administrative leader of the Nambudiris. This high priest was accorded the right to crown the kings of both Calicut and Cochin, though these rulers were traditionally at enmity. His jurisdiction in matters of the religious law governing social relations between castes, was acknowledged through out the area. The field of social relations of the Nambudiris was thus the whole of Kerala.

565 The ritual prestige of Nambudiris was sup-
596 ported by their wealth: each patrilineal extended family owned the land in at least one village, and in addition local groups of family heads managed lands owned by important Brahman temples in each kingdom. The Nambudiris had a patrilineal
[611] descent system of a peculiar type described below.

565 Below the Nambudiris in ritual rank came the
613 royal matrilineal lineages of Calicut, Walluva-
631 nad and Cochin. Though undoubtedly Nayar in origin and general culture, each of these lineages considered itself superior in ritual rank to its

6:Fawcett G-5 (ca. 1900)1915
AWll Kerala AWll
Nayar

(2) Aged 32. Four gold earrings in each ear. One "tambâk" ring on ring finger of left hand. A ring made of a bit of wire picked up on the road worn on the ring finger of left hand.

(3) Two gold earrings, set with a red stone, in each ear. Wears an amulet, contained in the ordinary cylindrical amulet case; but I have not noticed what the amulet itself actually is. He used to be much troubled by a devil, the departed spirit of an east-country Brâhman who died by drowning. He wore the charm to keep this gentleman off.

(4) Aged 24. A silver girdle worn, instead of a string, to which the languti is tied. An iron ring on the 3rd toe of the left foot. Rings are very rarely worn on the toes by any people in Malabar. All over the rest of the Madras Presidency they are, of course, common.

(5) Aged 39. Three earrings, of the usual pattern in each ear. A ring called an elephant's ring, made of silver, in which is arranged circularly a piece of the hair of an elephant's tail, worn on the ring finger of the left hand. There is one of these rings in my collection.

Names, etc., of a few are given—

Taravâd.	Name.	Occupation.	Age.
Pilathottathil ...	Thêyyan Mênon ...	Amshom Mênon or writer. ...	44
Potishêri	Unikkandan ...	Post runner	31
Valia parambath ...	Râman	Peon	20
Chatho Vltil	Vêlappa Mênon ...	Servant	26
Chandrethil ...	Kuttan	Do.	22
Earat	Krishnan	Cartman	39
Kanjćli	Shangara Mênon ...	Writer in a temple ...	34
Kôlangyarath ...	Chandu	Cooly	36

This last-named individual was measured in the Cannanore Jail, in which institution he, a prisoner himself, filled the office of hangman. He had hanged 10 men in the jail, and, at the rate of 2 rupees a case, he was owed 20 rupees; a nice little sum, which he would be given when leaving the jail at the expiration of his sentence. I was surprised to find a man of the Nâyar caste filling the office of hangman, so enquired the reason and was informed he had put aside the caste scruples while in jail. The office was in its way lucrative, and, when he emerged into freedom, no one would be the wiser, and he would have twenty and odd rupees in his pocket. He did not mind violating certain principles of his caste, doing that which is derogatory, so long as no one knew; but he *did* mind being found out.

7:Gough E-5 (1947-1949)1955 AWII Kerala AWII
Nayar
Tiyyar

588 182 564 rank, above the political system of the kingdom, and, in religious belief, the representatives of God on earth. All of these father-figures are collectively physiological fathers of the Nayars, so that in summoning them to deflower their women the Nayars call in real or classificatory fathers as well. When the bridegroom is a higher caste man, moreover (as when Tiyyar barbers call an elder of their caste), his venerable age leaves no doubt of his paternal role.

That the ritual bridegroom should be a father-figure to the community explains my informants' memory that the Asan might deflower Nayar women, but might prefer to forgo his right for money paid by some other bridegroom. It explains why the *desavari* must be present to give permission for the Nayar rite (and the Tandan for the Tiyyar rite) and receive money 'as if to recompense him'. The preliminary gifts by the high-caste Nayar girl's family to Nambûdiri landlords, the *addavari* and the Maharaja also bear out this hypothesis.

588 184 182 787 Among South Malabar retainer-Nayars and among Tiyyars a high-caste father-surrogate could not be obtained, so that 'they must perforce supply the priest's place themselves'. The retainer-Nayars get round this by selecting an *enangan* to represent the whole caste, who was deputed for the task by village elders and, supernaturally, by the position of the stars at his birth. Even so, the hazardous nature of the rite is indicated by the need to perform it at an auspicious time, when the astrologer (in some respects another father-figure since, though of lower caste, he was traditionally the trainer of Nayar boys in their village gymnasium, and a priest of Bhagavadi) gave the word.

588 604 184 182 Among North Malabar Tiyyars the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister might tie the *tâli*. She does this on behalf of her son, who is the proper husband for the girl, and before the marriage-pole and the sacred household lamp (divine phallic symbols). In this caste it is fitting that some kinsman or kinswoman of the bridegroom should perform the rite, because Tiyyars are not polyandrous and a girl becomes temporarily incorporated at marriage into her husband's dwelling group. Yet, if we assume the Oedipal fear, the Tiyyar bridegroom could not tie the *tâli* himself, since he is (ideally and often) a cross-cousin. If he is the mother's brother's son, he takes the girl, in this group where paternal claims offset matrilineal, from her *kâranavan* and his own father, a terrifying situation in view of his unconscious Oedipal fears. If he is the father's nephew, he takes her from her father and his own *kâranavan*, an equally dangerous situation. The problem is surmounted by permitting the mother's brother's wife or the father's sister of the girl to 'marry' her on behalf of her son.

564 [588] [305] [759] [582] The substitution of the barber-woman to tie the *tâli*, and the role of the barber as one intimately associated with the girl's passage to womanhood, may perhaps be understood by considering the general role of barbers in Tiyyar social life. The barbers cut hair for Tiyyars, and in South Malabar though not commonly in the north, their women are midwives. They rank parallel to the Tiyyar washerman with whom they are compared, since both castes have polluting occupations but take part in the rites of birth, girls' puberty, and death. In North Malabar Tiyyar men may marry barber women hypergamously, their children being barbers by matrilineal descent. Barbers are thus socially and sometimes physiologically the 'sons' of Tiyyars. They are also likened by the Tiyyars to their younger brothers. Barbers may not give food to Tiyyars but must attend Tiyyar feasts, when they sit on the left or 'younger' side of the feasting hall, the Tiyyars sitting on the right or 'older' side. Barbers address Tiyyar men as 'elder brother', but Tiyyars address older barber men by name, as they do juniors of their own caste. Despite his low rank, however, the barber is in some situations a paternal figure for Tiyyars. He assists the Tandan in his executive functions and may summon Tiyyar offenders to caste justice. An elderly barber is often a marriage-broker for Tiyyars, but he is primarily a priest for Tiyyar household rites. At a Tiyyar death he instructs the heirs to make offerings to the spirit, in the form of a mud image which he makes. On the fourteenth day, he purifies the household by anointing its members with oil

[693] [584] [793] [782] [783]

12:Peter E-5 (1939, 1949) 1963 AW11 Kerala AW11

but then this influence made itself felt rather by conversions and personal dealings than by any direct, government action, as now.

Transport, which in Kerala had always been difficult, was also greatly changed. Modern facilities, such as good roads, ferries, bridges; later, motor cars, railways, engine-driven ships, boats and launches; and finally, aeroplanes, have put thousands of boatmen and cartmen out of work and have not only brought formerly isolated and inaccessible parts of the country into contact with the rest, but have also made important centres become within easy and rapid reach of each other. As in other parts of the world where it is impossible for race distinctions to be observed in a system of general transport, caste is overlooked in public transport in Kerala, and this fact has greatly contributed to breaking down traditional socio-religious pre-occupations in such matters.

With the institution of a regular method of dispensing justice through courts, caste was dealt a further blow; the European masters of India refused to treat individuals otherwise than as equals before the law. The judiciary personnel was recruited from all sections of the population, regardless of caste or creed. This measure, together with the new way in which government servants were enlisted, gave the more enlightened castes of Nayars and Tiyas their chance. The present eminence in public affairs which these two communities have attained is in a large measure due to the opportunities thus thrown open to them.

Education, of course, also had a lot to do with it. Instead of the old kind in which village teachers taught native lore and traditions in an unchanging, ageless fashion, European-type schools were opened and modern means of education became available to all who wished to take advantage of them. These methods may be criticised today, since independance in 1947, as being un-Indian and useless in the context of the national culture, but the fact remains that they brought great changes in the outlook of the people, especially among the middle classes, who have indisputably benefitted from them.

Liberal, learned professions began to be followed by many to whom such careers were not open before, and again, regardless of caste distinctions, lawyers, doctors and teachers appeared in large numbers in Kerala. Many of them soon travelled to other parts of India, where their reputation as able and knowledgeable practitioners has never ceased to grow. A large part of the Government of India's New Delhi office personnel is made up of men from Kerala, in both high and subordinate positions, especially Nayars, so much so, indeed, that the fact has become the subject of a standing joke.